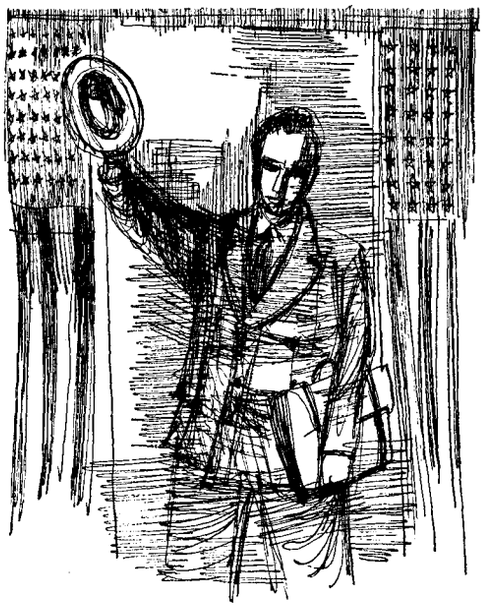
Shaping the Christian Message

— Gerard S. Sloyan

THE

Commonweal



Primaries or Conventions?

CHOOSING THE CANDIDATES

by Joseph F. Menez

Relentless Self-Judgment

THE WORLD OF IBSEN

by Stephen Whicher

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Editor
EDWARD S. SKILLIN

Managing Editor
JAMES O'GARA

Associate Editors
JAMES FINN
PHILIP SCHARPER

Contributing Editors
PHILIP BURNHAM
JOHN C. CORT
ANNE FREMANTLE
PHILIP T. HARTUNG
RICHARD HAYES

JOHN BRUBAKER: *Advertising Manager*

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THE
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A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-SECOND YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

REPORT ON A REPORT II

TWO WEEKS ago in these pages, we discussed some of the issues arising from the publication of John Cogley's *Report on Blacklisting*. When that editorial was written, Mr. Cogley, former executive editor of this magazine, had received a subpena from the House Un-American Activities Committee but had not yet testified. Since that time, he has made his appearance before the Committee, and further comment seems called for.

As far as Mr. Cogley's report itself is concerned, we cannot attempt to summarize it here or to comment upon it in detail. The two volumes, one on Hollywood and one on the TV-radio industry, represent months of work by a sizable staff of researchers and journalists under Mr. Cogley's direction. The picture that emerges of blacklisting as an institutionalized practice seems factually unassailable, whether one approves or disapproves of the practice itself. Hollywood *Variety*, for example, said that the report "serves only to document what is common knowledge and by such documentation publicize the extent and influence of the self-appointed guardians of the nation's mores." If Mr. Cogley has committed any offense, it seems to be that he has stated publicly what people in the entertainment industries privately accept as fact.

The reaction of many of those mentioned in the report struck us as downright peculiar. The volumes were hardly out when some of them began to defend themselves vigorously against charges that had never been made—a fact which strengthens our suspicion that few of these people had actually taken the trouble to read the two volumes themselves, but were depending on early and misleading newspaper stories on the study.

Others who have taken strong exception to the report on blacklisting follow a different tack. As far as we are able to follow their reasoning, it goes something like this: there is no such thing as blacklisting, but it is a good thing and we ought to have more of it. The report calls the process whereby some people have managed to get their names removed from these lists "clearance," but, one after another, various individuals have come forward to deny completely that there is any such thing as clearance; there is only, as George Sokolsky put it, a "rehabilitation" process, or, as an official of the American Legion expressed it, the creation of a "climate of employability" by a process exactly like that Mr. Cogley described. The difference between these terms escapes us.

According to these critics, then, there are lists of people who cannot work, but no blacklists. There is no such thing as clearance; there is only "rehabilitation" and the restoration of a "climate of employability." There are no key people who must be satisfied if a person is to be restored to work; there are only certain columnists and key officials of various organizations who frequently consult informally with each other on such matters and who must be satisfied before "the climate of employability" is restored. The conclusion is inescapable that Mr. Cogley described the essence of the system exactly and truthfully.

As far as the House Un-American Activities Committee is concerned, we said two weeks ago that we resented the way Mr. Cogley was subpenaed in the first place, and we still do. The very fact that he received a subpena at all, plus the statements made by the Chairman of the Committee and the kind of questioning to which he was submitted by Committee Counsel, simply invited the kind of smear-treatment he received at the hands of some sections of the press.

During the hearings, there was one healthy de-

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velopment. Before Mr. Cogley appeared, the Committee announced that he would have to reveal all his sources of information. In many cases, Mr. Cogley could not in conscience do this, since various people in the entertainment industry had given him information only because of his pledge of secrecy; if they were identified, they faced loss of their jobs as reprisal for talking. When Mr. Cogley appeared before the Committee, Congressmen Morgan M. Moulder and Clyde Doyle stated publicly that it was traditional for a journalist to protect his sources of information and that they did not believe that any effort should be made to try to force Mr. Cogley to reveal his. The Committee then did not attempt to press Mr. Cogley further on this particular point.

Counsel for the Committee, however, led Mr. Cogley backward and forward through his two volumes, questioning his choice of a word or a phrase here, arguing with his line of reasoning there, frequently asking why some particular point was not made as the Counsel would have made it. Mr. Cogley was on the stand for hours, and the transcript of his testimony amounts to more than one hundred pages of double-spaced typewritten material. We still find it hard to believe that such a grilling of an author about what he has written could take place in America; there is about the whole procedure a strong note of Alice in Wonderland—or of Orwell.

Blacklisting is not a simple subject to discuss, and it is certainly controversial. Anyone who writes about it can expect to be called upon to defend himself from criticism. But it is hardly proper or

Editorial Comment on the Blacklisting Hearings

INTIMIDATION BY INQUIRY

from the Washington *Post*

John Cogley, former editor of The Commonweal and author of a recent report on blacklisting published by the Fund for the Republic, has been subpoenaed to appear today before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. . . . This is, we suggest, an inquiry of dubious propriety. . . .

The Constitution expressly forbids Congress to make any law abridging the freedom of the press, and implicitly it forbids Congress to abridge freedom of the press by calling an author to account for what he has written. Freedom of the press would be very seriously abridged if writers stood in fear of being hauled before a congressional committee whenever they expressed opinions on controversial issues. Statements in the report have been challenged by certain individuals; whatever the merit of these challenges, Congress is not the place to receive them.

Moreover, the Un-American Activities Committee has no business trying to make a writer reveal names which he has undertaken to keep in confidence. Freedom of the press would be seriously abridged if committees of Congress ignored the obligation of reporters to maintain the confidentiality of sources of information.

If the Un-American Activities Committee wants assistance or advice from Mr. Cogley, it is, of course, at liberty to invite him to come and testify. An invitation is very different from a subpoena. The tactics of the committee invite the supposition, however, that its intent is more retaliation than information. . . . We earnestly suggest to Representative Walter that he and his committee colleagues read Mr. Cogley's report—and that they leave Mr. Cogley himself alone.

COGLEY QUIZ

from the N. Y. *Times*

. . . Exactly three days after the Fund [for the Republic] had made public its two-volume report on blacklisting, the House Committee peremptorily subpoenaed—did not invite—John Cogley, director of the study, to appear before it in Washington. The intention, according to Chairman Francis E. Walter, was to determine among other things "what the purposes of the Fund and of Mr. Cogley truly are." Mr. Walter's strict objectivity may be considered against the background of his earlier query in announcing a forthcoming investigation of the Fund itself: "Is this foundation . . . a friend or a foe in our nation's death struggle against the Communist conspiracy?" Paul G. Hoffman, President George N. Shuster of Hunter College, Chester Bowles, Dean Erwin N. Griswold of the Harvard Law School and other noted Americans on the Fund's Board of Directors must have deeply appreciated that comment by the Democratic statesman from Pennsylvania.

Be that as it may, the context and tone of questions put by the committee counsel to Mr. Cogley on the subject of his blacklisting report raise the strongest suspicions that here was an obvious effort to harass a writer for what he had written. Mr. Cogley himself is former executive editor of the highly respected liberal Roman Catholic weekly, The Commonweal, and he is capable of defending his own works. But we are concerned over any and every effort, no matter how it may be disguised, to intimidate a man for writing what he believes; and when a committee of the House of Representatives skates perilously close to doing that, we think it comes equally close to violating the First Amendment.

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just that one side of such a debate should be able to enlist an official body of the Congress of the United States to harass its opposition. The Washington *Post* called its editorial on these hearings "Intimidation by Inquiry," and that title sums them up very aptly. No writer relishes the prospect that he and his family may be embarrassed by a subpena from some Congressional committee that does not happen to like his work. No writer likes the idea that the extremist press will be encouraged to set upon and smear him. Yet that is exactly what happened here, and the cause of freedom has hardly been advanced in the process.

If the line of questioning followed by the Committee Counsel left any doubt that these hearings constituted a dangerous encroachment on freedom of the press, Representative Francis J. Walter, the Chairman of the Committee, himself spelled the matter out quite plainly. Toward the end of the questioning, Representative Doyle said he thought Mr. Cogley was entitled to make a statement or ask a question if he wished. Mr. Cogley then said: "I would like to know, if I may, why I was called." In his reply, Representative Walter said: "We called you for the purpose of ascertaining what your sources were *in order to determine whether or not your conclusions were the conclusions we would have reached had we embarked on this sort of project.*" (italics added)

In the face of this statement, we can only ask the obvious: since when has the author of a book been subject to Congressional harassment to determine whether or not the members of the Committee or its staff approve of his conclusions? Since when has a writer been under any kind of obligation to make sure his reasoning agrees with that of the members or the staff of the House Un-American Activities Committee? And if this is indeed the new rule, what ever happened to the Constitutional guarantees on freedom of speech and freedom of the press?

The dangers involved in the Committee's entire procedure in this matter are obvious. That our opinion is shared by others is indicated by some of the editorials reprinted elsewhere in these pages, and by the fact that Senator Lehman of New York has already charged that the Committee's procedure raised "serious Constitutional questions regarding freedom of the press." We consider it a violation of the First Amendment and a flagrant abuse of power for any Congressional Committee to attempt to pressure writers into conformity with its opinion. That such a violation took place in the case of Mr. Cogley is unmistakable.

FOOD BANK FOR ASIA?

A RECENT proposal by Pakistan sums up in itself many of the complexities which face the United States in its efforts to devise effective strategy for the current phase of "tepid peace" between Communist and free worlds. The Pakistan proposal seems, on the surface, simple enough: that the United States should establish in Pakistan a permanent food bank of one million tons of wheat and rice from which any nation in Southeast Asia could draw in time of famine.

The advantages of such a food bank are many and obvious. It would give countries of Southeast Asia the assurance that food was at hand in the event of famine or serious shortage, and would not, as in the past, have to be shipped thousands of miles, only to arrive too late for the thousands who had starved to death while the food was on its way. Such a food bank would also, as Pakistan has pointed out, be dramatic proof that SEATO is, as it claims to be, interested in the economy of Southeast Asia as well as in its military defense.

Some American observers, however, have pointed out that a permanent food bank, by providing "handouts," would only delay the day when Pakistan and other countries in the region can feed themselves by making the necessary changes in their economies. Such a development, they argue, will take a long time at best, and a food bank would only make it longer. Further, such a plan might antagonize the rice-producing countries and make the U.S. new enemies as well as new friends.

Untouched, meanwhile, by this swirl of argument and counter-argument is the fact that hunger is Asia's greatest enemy, and that a year of either flood or drought inevitably brings death by starvation to many thousands of Asians. At this time, for instance, a severe famine is sweeping East Pakistan, where death today or tomorrow confronts thousands. Similar famines will threaten areas of Southeast Asia for several years ahead. This is the "short-range fact," regardless of what the best "long-range solution" for Southeast Asia may be.

For this reason, although we recognize the force of the practical objections which its critics have brought forward, we trust that the Government officials who are studying the proposed food bank

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will put it into a context of charity and justice. Such a context is, in this case, every bit as "realistic" as the technological and political arguments thus far brought forward against the Pakistan proposal.

THAT OLD BROKEN RECORD

IT IS an accepted fact of political life that an election year will produce a strange crop of facts and fancies, charges and countercharges. But 1956 promises to break all previous records. No sooner do we think that we have the topsy-turvy picture in focus again and see order restored than some speech or wonderful bit of political by-play chides us for our presumption.

We had grown accustomed, for instance, to certain right-wing columnists criticizing our present Secretary of State in much the same terms that they had once leveled against Dean Acheson. Nor were we really surprised when those who once said the Democrats had betrayed their party in 1944 by nominating a man who was ill suddenly said that loyalty to party and country demanded support of Candidate Eisenhower. And we were only momentarily surprised and amused when Senator William F. Knowland—who has long been on terms of uneasy coexistence with the moderate "Eisenhower" Republicans—was given the honor of announcing that the President still intended to run.

But we can still be surprised—and dismayed—by the manner in which some politicians can twist the "Communist issue" to their own ends. When we recently criticized the Senate Republican Policy Committee for issuing a staff-prepared memorandum warning that the Communists wanted a Democratic victory in November, we noted that several responsible Republican leaders disowned the memorandum. But we also said that perhaps the only way some Republicans would learn that partisan exploitation of Communism as a political issue was a dangerous, two-edged weapon was when it was turned against them. Only a day of two after that editorial was written, the possibilities were dramatically underlined: Ambassador Jacob A. Malik of the Soviet Union announced that he liked Ike. "I'm for Eisenhower. . . . We can do business with President Eisenhower." Only those whose every action is a negative response to Russian stimulus will think that Mr. Malik's statement proves that President Eisenhower is "soft on Communism," or that a vote for Ike is a vote for Malik. We hoped that even the staff that had prepared the memo for the Policy Planning Committee would learn a needed lesson and that "soft on Communism" charges would drop out of GOP political speeches.

But—and it is here that we were both surprised and dismayed—the charge was immediately revived by a Democratic contender who has seen his own party suffer under just such distorted, falsifying charges. Mr. Averell Harriman picked up that old broken record that served Republicans so well in 1952 and gave it a new spin. "This fellow," he said, referring to the President, "has been as naive as any person in history about the true nature of the Communist conspiracy." And he clearly implied the President was "soft on Communism."

In his opposition to Communism, Governor Harriman does have a long and admirable record. As he says, he was not taken in. The Commonweal has shared many of Mr. Harriman's judgments about Communism in the past. Our expectations concerning the Geneva Conference, for instance, were as low as his. He has, we think, a right to be proud of his achievements. But he should not so readily imply that his political opponents are "soft on Communism." Such deliberate manipulation of serious issues poorly serves the nation, as contender Harriman should well know. And the dangerous farce is not improved merely because the roles of the two parties are reversed.

SENATOR GEORGE

AT THE END of the current session of Congress, Senator Walter George of Georgia will retire from the Senate to become President Eisenhower's representative to NATO. For over thirty years he has served his state and country well, and has particularly distinguished himself as an able and dedicated advocate of internationalism in the conduct of this country's foreign affairs.

It was he, for example, who led the recent fight in the Senate for support of the Administration's foreign aid bill, and much of his thought on the role of the United States in world affairs is summed up in what he said on that occasion. "I cannot think," Senator George told his Senate colleagues, "that Divine Providence has permitted us to become the responsible leaders of the world only to break that hope now. If the free people lose confidence in us, we will have disappointed the last hope of mankind. . . ."

The United States Senate will sorely miss this distinguished Senator, who has consistently placed the great power of the United States within a context of great world responsibility.

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Choosing the Candidates

"CONVENTIONS HAVE BEEN MOST USEFUL DEMOCRATIC AGENCIES FOR THE PEACEFUL TRANSMISSION OF POWER"

JOSEPH F. MENEZ

THIS YEAR, as in preceding convention years, the institution of the national convention is being denounced as the studied labor of hack politicians, and the voters are being urged to rid the nation once and for all of this monstrous device that is undemocratic, corrupt, and unreliable. There is nothing new in this. Irvin S. Cobb characterized the national convention as representing "more wasted energy, more futile, bootless endeavor, more useless expenditures of noise, money and talent than any institution on earth." To Henry James it represented "the triumph of the superficial and the apotheosis of the raw." Today, however, these views have considerable popular support; a recent poll showed that seventy-three per cent of the voters preferred a nation-wide primary to the convention.

National conventions often involve compromise. To some, this is a "bad word"; yet without it the nominating process would be impossible. Americans too often fail to see that political issues and controversies must be settled by debate and compromise or they will deteriorate into bitterness and defection. It is difficult to understand why a technique used daily, from the settling of labor-management disputes to domestic differences, is considered objectionable in politics. The convention, after all, is nothing more than a political arena where the final adjustments have to be made to determine an acceptable candidate who can win. Reflecting the divergencies that do exist in various parts of the country, the delegates select such a candidate through compromise and conciliation, then stake their collective reputation and the party's accountability on him.

The nominating convention, aware of its traditions, principles and responsibilities, will not select any of "God's angry men" but will go down the middle between the extremes, the bold and the standpat. This is no mean achievement in self-discipline. To pick the "best man," if he is one who is outside the temper of the times or who is anathema to large voting blocks, is to court disaster and invite failure at the polls.

Mr. Menez is a member of the political science department of Loyola University, Chicago.

Parties are responsible agencies in the political process, and the convention is the mechanism through which the Presidential nominee is chosen. At the national convention the party's total organization operates at the same time, the same place, and toward the same end. The party may win and become the "government," or it may lose and become the "opposition." In either case, it is easily identifiable as the agency which engineered the choice of the party leader. By contrast, one of the great weaknesses of the primary is that it encourages factionalism and elevates as leaders men who cannot unite the party.

CONVENTIONS have been most useful democratic agencies for the peaceful transmission of power. Here, perhaps, is the unassailable argument for the convention, that it succeeds in providing for the peaceful and orderly replacing of leadership, the settling of differences within the party, and the amelioration of factionalism behind the leader. In this respect, conventions, reflecting the maximum degree of internal flexibility and adaptability in allocating power, resemble constitutional conventions.

Rather than being the initiating factor in determining leadership, the convention is the end product, which legitimizes previous grass-root decisions. It accepts, confirms, and ratifies decisions and plebiscites already made and agreed upon in state primaries and conventions. To date, this is the only agency to do this successfully in our society. To tamper with so venerable an institution is risky.

Herbert Agar wrote in *The People's Choice* that the early Congressional caucus nominated men of stature, even by world standards, while the convention has nominated a feeble and "meritless tribe." Such a charge does violence to the record. However much we revere some of the early fathers as writers, patriots, or thinkers, they were not uniformly great Presidents. Historian Arthur Schlesinger polled some fifty-five authorities in American History, asking them to rate the Presidents. Of the ten listed as "Great" or "Near Great" only three (Washington, J. Adams, and Jefferson)

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were nominated by caucus. To classify Lincoln, the two Roosevelts, Wilson, Jackson, Cleveland, and Polk among the "meritless tribe," as Agar does, is to substitute myth for fact.

Similarly, Lord Bryce, in *The American Commonwealth,* wanted to know why great men do not become President; outstanding men like Clay, Webster and Calhoun had been frequently passed over, only to be replaced, he thought, by ordinary and undistinguished Presidents. What Bryce failed to see is that the factors which prevented these statesmen from becoming President would have also operated in any representative democracy. Further, in *The American Presidency* Harold Laski points out how facile is Bryce's judgment, for at least eleven Presidents have certainly been extraordinary men, a total not proportionately less than the number of remarkable men who became Prime Ministers in the same period.

IT IS undeniable, except perhaps to the die-hards and extremists, that in Dwight D. Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson the 1952 conventions picked the best possible available candidates—candidates, it might be added, who could have been overlooked in a different nominating system. When the chips are down, as the special correspondent of the London *Times* cabled that year, Americans "have the habit of doing the right thing" and "the long arm of the people's choice can go deep into the barrel and pull out the best men. . . ."

The convention system is regularly denounced on the grounds that it permits the nomination of "dark horses" and suppresses the talented. Walter Bagehot's aphorism, made in connection with Lincoln's nomination, that "success in lottery is no argument for lotteries" is now standard equipment among those who would eliminate the convention system. It is, perhaps, worth suggesting that "dark horses" are never as haphazardly chosen as it might appear. Thus Bagehot was mistaken in thinking that Lincoln was nominated by accident, for in fact his pre-convention campaign was carefully organized. In the same way, Henry Clay and the Whigs attempted to discredit James Polk, the first "dark horse" nominee, as a "mediocre nobody," but they were carefully ignoring the fact that Polk had been in the House for twelve years, Speaker for two terms, Governor of Tennessee, and an aspirant for the Vice Presidential nomination in 1840.

People fear cabals at the national conventions, but the record of a century and a quarter reveals that attempts to "rig the convention" have been few and successes even fewer. Wendell Wilkie, alone among the "dark horses," had neither military nor political experience. Yet, even in his case it would be rash to assume that, had he been elected, he would have made a weak President. It is true that he was propelled—in fact, catapulted—into public life, but he was not entirely unknown, for in the summer of the convention the public opinion polls showed him running ahead of Roosevelt. Harding, the favorite example of the "dark horse," not only went to the national convention with a bloc of votes and an organization committed to get him the nomination, but polled sixteen million votes to Cox's nine million, a point that is often overlooked.

Even if a convention nominates a "dark horse," however, this fact is not a compelling argument against the convention system. It might, instead, depending on the times, be considered a virtue, for in certain circumstances such a choice can eliminate factionalism. If the Democrats could have picked a "dark horse" in 1860, for example, the Civil War might have been postponed or avoided; and if the Republicans could have done so in 1912 the party would not have split, allowing Wilson to become President.

The convention system is often unfavorably compared with the nominating system in England in which the Prime Minister struggles to the top after many years in Parliament. In the American system, it is charged, a political unknown can emerge almost any time. Yet the truth is that the Prime Minister in England is not always the obvious leader while in the United States the education of the President begins long before—perhaps many years before—convention time. Presidential hopefuls have their eyes on the office long before they openly declare themselves, all the while guiding their public acts to that end. We like to believe that the candidate does not seek the office, but this is a myth—unless it means only that he should not seek it too openly or brazenly. Louis McHenry Howe began his efforts to obtain the Presidential nomination for Franklin D. Roosevelt as early as 1912.

IT IS SAID that conventions are not representative, but this charge is disproved, I think, by the fact that Governors play a very large role in the nomination. Governors are much closer to the people of their state than out-of-state Congressmen are, and a candidate who cannot bank on gubernatorial support, as Taft and Kefauver could not do in 1952, is doomed to failure. Governors are not only, for the most part, party leaders in their states, but, being responsible public officials, they cannot be dismissed as political bosses who have "fixed" the nomination—if for no other reason than the fact that their own political success is often wrapped up with that of the nominee.

The Presidential preference primary is suggested as the panacea which will eliminate for all time the iniquities of the convention. But if such a nominating scheme were adopted, it would actually create more problems than it could solve. Certainly, it completely

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blurs the distinction between the nominating process and the election process.

How, when, and by whom would the platform be drawn up? What would be the relationship between the Presidential and Vice Presidential candidate? Would the candidates come to terms with state "bosses" or organizations or would they attempt to build up a personal national organization? With numerous candidates in the running, so that any single candidate would be unlikely to receive a majority of votes, would the voters of the party support a winner who received only a plurality—perhaps a plurality constituting merely a fraction of the votes? What would happen to the independent voter who did not register in one of the parties? Would not the role of the public relations man, looming large and formidable in the background, cause leadership to atrophy and party responsibility to shrink? Would not the involved election machinery rule out last-minute candidates, such as Hughes in 1916, who was on the Supreme Court and could not openly seek the job, and Eisenhower in 1952, who was not relieved of his NATO command until June 1? The difficulty of answering these questions satisfactorily makes the value of the primary highly questionable.

The convention system has worked, unregulated by the Constitution and by law. It is extra-legal, extra-constitutional, pragmatic and historical. Its evolution within the American system is neither theoretical nor doctrinaire. It is as native to the American environment as apple pie, and, aside from one or two instances that even its friends deplore, it has brought forth the man of the hour, served the nation well and is the most colorful conclave and democratic nominating agency in existence. It should be preserved.

NEW CATECHISM

Shaping the Christian Message

GERARD S. SLOYAN

NAPOLEON was nothing if not methodical. Once he had settled the boundaries and the liberties of nations he turned to their more sentimental needs. In virtue of an "extract from the minutes of Maret, Secretary of State," dated the Tuileries, April 4, 1806, he proposed for use in all the churches of the Empire a single catechism. Cardinal Belloy of Paris thought it a good idea (he said), and even went so far as to suggest in his preface to it that accompanying the name of Constantine as a protector of the true Religion should be that of the Hero "who had re-established in trying circumstances the public cult of the Holy Religion of our fathers." Happily the catechism chosen was largely Bossuet's work, and a lot worse fate than that might have overtaken the children of France and Italy. Nonetheless, it is pathetic in retrospect to read the recommendation provided it by the Cardinal Legate Caprara. His general argument ran that since we are all called to the one Faith and practice, what more fitting or useful than that one and the same method be employed to impart Christian doctrine? After all, had not the Supreme Pontiffs asked frequently for this very thing? And now here is Napoleon I, Emperor of France and King of Italy, who "having removed all obstacles has ardently desired and seen to the compilation and publication" of just such a "single Catechism for all."

The idea of perfect conformity in the matter of doctrinal formulas for popular mastery has a much older parentage. It is true that almost every diocese in Europe had its own catechism in the days between Trent and Napoleon, but in the beginning such was not the case. That is to say, in what is commonly conceded to be a beginning in the making of catechisms there were strong urgings to unanimity in both the letter and the spirit. In 1529 when Martin Luther brought out his *kleine Katechismus* for "ordinary pastors and preachers"—it superseded his *Greater Catechism* of the previous year to become the standard instruction book of Southern Germany—he was insistent on uniformity of text. Luther erected a pedagogic monument by achieving utter simplicity in an old art. The treatise in question-and-answer form went back at least to Alcuin's time, which would be the Aachen of the ninth century. Both before and after it a cascade of popular expositions of the Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary, Creed and Commandments had been produced for the use of pastors and such persons as could read. Since the break-up of the institution of the catechumenate in the fifth century there had been no dearth of such materials. It is important to observe, however, that none of them was directed to children. What Luther

Father Sloyan is a member of the faculty of the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

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did was to put in the place of the various medieval "mirrors of piety," "septenaries" and "elucidaries" a vigorous question-and-answer presentation of the chief truths of faith, tendentious but not quite heretical. It caught hold immediately.

The first Catholic catechism came out of Augsburg in 1530. By mid-century there were dozens of them, and it has been conjectured that their multiplicity and diversity was their great weakness. St. Peter, Canisius in Germany and a team of Dominican theologians acting under the instructions of Trent were off to a much slower start in 1555 and 1566 respectively, but the thing was already well launched under other auspices and it had the advantage of uniformity. To accompany early wall-charts for children Luther had devised a manual known as a "catechism." This was an innovation in that the term had for centuries been confined to the content of oral instruction rather than to a book. There was nothing tentative about Luther. In the preface to his Shorter Catechism he wrote:
". . . I pray you . . . who are pastors or preachers . . . to take pity on your people . . . and to help us to introduce the Catechism among the people, especially among the young; and let those who cannot do better take these tables and forms (wall charts, i.e., the medieval *tabulae*), and instruct the people in them word for word; in this wise:

First, the preacher must above all things beware of and avoid the use of various and different texts and forms of the Commandments, Lord's Prayer, Creed, Sacrament, etc.; he must take one form and keep to it, and constantly teach the same, year after year. For simple folk and the young must be taught one definite text and version, else they will become easily confused if today we teach thus and next year thus, as though we wanted to improve it, and so all our labor and toil is lost . . . we must always teach . . . in such a manner that we do not alter one syllable, or preach tomorrow differently from today."

THIS APPROACH to pedagogy may cause dismay to the modern mind but unquestionably it has prevailed in religious formation since, whether Protestant or Catholic. Rote learning of formulas by the young is alternately defended as the sole guarantee of doctrinal accuracy throughout an adult lifetime, and condemned as the "parrot system" which insures nothing quite so much as a distaste for religion. In any case, prescribed national catechisms among Catholics have come more and more to supplant diocesan catechisms or those of private authorship, and with uniformity there comes a presumption in favor of learning by heart the answers provided. Any approach to popular religious teaching which has behind it the episcopate of an entire country is a most serious matter. The matter is made more complex by the question of exactly who is the learner contemplated. Most frequently bishops do not say, except indirectly by indicating that this book is to be used in schools, in the preparation of adult converts, and as a basis for pulpit instruction. This puts on the authors of catechisms an immense burden, relieved in good part (for them at least) by the fact that so many of them seem unmindful of it.

In the United States we have a national catechism, composed at the direction of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore held in 1884. Largely an adaptation of an Irish catechism by Butler, deriving in turn from the *Catechismus Romanus* (which was prepared *for pastors* in 1565-6 at the instance of the Council of Trent), the *Baltimore Catechism* has undergone one major revision (1941) at the hands of theologians appointed by the committee of bishops of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. There is freedom to use other catechisms in American dioceses. For example, that of Joseph Deharbe, S.J. (1847) continued in use in both German and English, long after the Council of Baltimore, while an adaptation of Cardinal Gasparri's *Catechismus Catholicus* (1930) is widely employed under the title *Catholic Faith*. Books of instruction for adults in query form are also fairly numerous. The commonest child's catechism of today, however, continues to resemble the pioneer effort of Father Thomas Kincaid in 1891; that is to say, it is an explanation, with or without pictures and word-study, of the meaning of the questions and answers of the *Baltimore Catechism*.

LAST YEAR the German hierarchy approved and officially adopted for use in all the dioceses of Germany a new catechism designed for children, *Katholischer Katechismus der Bistümer Deutschlands*. It gives promise of being a landmark. Scattered accounts of it have been available in English in *Worship*, *The Sower*, *Blackfriars*, and *The Catholic Herald* of London. In the Spring, 1956, issue of *The Downside Review*, major attention is devoted to the work. There are articles there by Dom Ralph Russell and Fathers

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F. H. Drinkwater and Clifford Howell, S.J., while Donald H. Bridgehouse presents sizable excerpts in translation from the catechism itself and the teacher's manual which accompanies it. A supplement to the April *Sower* makes available in English the 248 questions-and-answers or *Merksatze* (summations) in which the 136 lessons culminate, and the entire lesson on Holy Scripture and Oral Tradition as the source of Catholic teaching.

Perhaps what best guarantees success to the German catechism is that it was so laboriously prepared for. Otto Willmann, Wilhelm Pichler and Heinrich Stieglitz of Munich had devised the so-called "Munich method" of catechetics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Basically, it consisted in building up religious concepts Herbartian-style, starting from some story, preferably Scriptural, and terminating in a dogmatic or moral proposition for memorization. This method replaced the traditional exegesis of lengthy memorized texts which came first (and often last). A catechism by Theodore Monnichs, S.J., served the Germans as an interim replacement for Deharbe between 1925 and 1935. Then came the commission around 1938 to the *Deutsches Katechetenverein* under Msgr. Gotzel to prepare a catechism which was to be new, not simply in method, but also in content. A series of national conferences followed to discuss the problem. Dr. Klemens Tilmann and Father Franz Schreibmayr, now priests of the Oratory, are largely responsible for the actual composition of the text, which was done and redone with Teutonic thoroughness. The Bishops' Conference of 1953 finally approved the tentative work—long circulated in mimeographed form—and there emerged under the direction of the Bishop of Eichstatt and the seal of Messrs. Herder of Freiburg three publications: the 288-page stiff-covered catechism for children eleven or twelve years of age, an introduction to its history and principles by Dr. Hubert Fischer, and the first half of a teachers' manual done by Father Schreibmayr and Msgr. Tilmann.

It is interesting that Father Drinkwater maintains that the infinite pains that went into the German catechism account for its success less than the fact that it is conceived as a communication—big persons speaking to little persons about divine things. The chief difference between the usual catechism and the voice of Christ in the Gospels is that one is a study in propositional theology and the other in personal theology. Young people generally do not care about propositions, or what things may be predicated of what other things. That A is invariably true of B, given the fact of C, does not enthrall them. A, B and C are not real to them yet. Since the parts are unknown, the sum is unimportant. "God is our Father who loves us" (in a sense Christ's only message) has a good chance with a child, provided you can get "love" across to him, and that there is some person in his life called "father"—his own or some other—with whom he can equate it.

The catechism problem is not solely one of the vocabulary and method proper to children. Primarily it is one of content. On the assumption that the minds of children can be successfully engaged, how shall they be engaged in the contemplation of Christian mystery? The Roman Catechism ("of the Council of Trent") made no innovations whatever in this matter, but discussed in detail a stereotyped content. Its four parts deal with faith and the Apostles' Creed, the Sacraments, the Ten Commandments, and Prayer, the latter chiefly a phrase-by-phrase exposition of the Lord's Prayer. One almost cannot learn from this book that Christ's twofold law of love and His supreme command to "love one another as I have loved you" fulfilled the Decalogue. The life He came to bring is a fugitive in these 370 pages. It appears first on page 115 as an effect of Baptism, *after* the mention of deliverance from penalties as a result of this Sacrament. We are described, in this fragment on the life of grace, as a) just, b) sons of God, c) inheritors of salvation. As much attention is given to assisting grace as to elevating grace (actual and sanctifying, i.e., or transient divine aid and the permanent principle of holiness). Only under the Eucharist does one learn fleetingly that those who practice piety and religion "receive the Son of God within themselves so as to be implanted in His Body as living members."

Then there are things like the use of Bellarmine's famous definition of the Church—the one which speaks of the same faith, Sacraments and government under pastors and a visible head—which met a contemporary apologetic need admirably, but which scarcely conveys the mystical riches of all that Christ meant by His "Church." This unbalanced view of the message of Christ can obscure the divine plan in the child's mind. Any packaging of the redemptive scheme in tidy "theses," however helpful mnemonically, runs the risk of serious departure from the way in which the Good News came to man and hence from the Good News itself. That way was through Jesus Christ, true teacher, companion, friend. His message was God-centered, not fixed on Himself except insofar as He was a valid emissary of His Father. Catechetical presentations must therefore be theocentric but delivered as if from the lips of Christ; proposed for acceptance, moreover, on motives such as those which He used to stir His hearers.

MODERN catechetics is becoming increasingly Scriptural and liturgical for a number of reasons. We are returning to many primitive ways in the Church not because they are old but because they are sound. The recounting of Sacred History out of both Testa-

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ments is the oldest way of instruction in faith, since the first Christians knew no book better recommended. They taught it in connection with the Eucharistic meal because no more fitting opportunity was at hand. Without schools, teen-clubs or Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, the Gospel was implanted solidly in thousands of young hearts. The exposition of morals and doctrine by way of Creed, Pater Noster, and Decalogue had light and warmth because it was part of the Baptismal ceremony or joined to the public reading of extended Bible passages. Taken apart from liturgical celebration, it could be a dull and dry business. The low point in the catechetical process was the medieval delight in cataloguing things by number—sins crying to heaven for vengeance, ways to be accessory to another's sin—so helpful as a memory aid and so unlike the non-arithmetic Christ. Particularly illustrative of this wrenching out of context is the case of the Beatitudes, which in the minds of most children are an "eight" (just as the spiritual and corporal works of mercy are a "seven"). A wildly disproportionate amount of catechism space is given to the Commandments, even to the six positive precepts of the Church, over this "divinely high standard" which served as an opening theme for Christ's proclamation of His Message.

The new German catechism breaks cleanly away from the counter-Reformation manuals which took their shape from what had been denied about Catholic faith. It is not the first continental attempt to do so. The Dutch and French national catechisms, for example, have also made a start in this direction. The German catechism has a unifying theme: "the Good Tidings," or the marvelous story of God's dealings with man from the beginning of Creation to the end of time. As to the children's personal response, the book hopes to bring to life in them great gratitude at being chosen as members of Christ—recipients of the Tidings—through that Church which instructed them and through the life of which they share.

The book is in three parts. The first one of forty-four lessons tells of God the Father, known to us by His work of Creation; of His Son sent to reconcile us with God after our fall from favor in Adam, so much are we one with each other in adversity and prosperity; of the life, death and resurrection of that Son once He had preached fulfillment of Israel's promised kingdom of God, and of His ascent to the Father; of the Holy Spirit "incarnate" in us men as He guides the Church; of God's mysterious inner life as a Trinity of Persons. The second part has forty-six lessons on the Church; Christ's Bride, in one figure, His Body in another; on His work as teacher and worshipper of God in union with us in the Mass and the other Sacraments; on the grace-life of Christians and how it can be preserved amidst threat. The third part has forty-six lessons on our life as members of Christ and sharers in His priesthood, according to the innate dignity of that state and our fidelity to the Commandments. The final return of Christ in glory terminates the treatment, along with those things called "last" by Christians.

A GREAT drawback in the way God is presented in most catechisms is that it is simply the dogmatic tract on the "One God" digested and served. Often the children are provided more with a metaphysical exercise in the negation of qualities which cannot be predicted of Him than with an account of His self-revelation from Abraham to Christ. The German catechism begins its discussion of the lesson "God Cares for Us" with an account of His care for the Israelites in their desert wanderings. Solomon on his knees after his Temple is erected—"Lord, God of my people, the skies cannot contain Thee, how much less this house which I have built"—introduces Him as all-present and all-knowing. The Prodigal Son is used to begin the lesson on God's mercy, and Joseph's forgiveness of his brothers after Jacob's death initiates the lesson "God Turns Evil to Good." Some brief paragraphs of explanation follow the opening Scripture passage, always in direct language. For example: "God sees everything that happens, and hears everything that is said. He looks upon man with a very special love, and hears his prayer. He sees not only our outward appearance but our heart as well. He has understanding not only for what we say, but for the most hidden cry our hearts might utter."

Expositions like these are followed in each lesson by a few unanswered questions for class discussion. Thus: "Consider: 1. What does the sentence mean, 'His dwelling is in approachable light'? 2. Why does God always love what is good? 3. Why does God hate all that is evil?"

These considerations may be one or several. They are followed by the "summaries" which are undoubtedly meant for memorization. A lesson may have one, two or three such summaries. They are full of blunt, Germanic words, which make for a certain strength and directness. Most important, they flow from what has gone before. "For my life," the section after these questions and answers in each chapter, contains practical conclusions; thus: "Wherever I am, whatever I do, God my Father sees me," or "The most precious thing I have on earth is the grace-life. Only one thing matters. To live as God's child. Only one thing is to be feared—to separate oneself from God, to die without His grace and be forever lost." Invariably "God's word" follows, brief verses from one or both Testaments, and then, at times, "From the Church's life," "Task," "Proverb," or "Rule of Life." An example of the "Tasks" from the chapter on God's holiness would be: "Each time we assist at Mass, we shall join in the song of the angels: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God. . .". A sample

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Rule of Life is: "Don't ask: why does God let me suffer. Ask instead, how can I best use this test?" There is a drawing to illustrate each lesson and there is careful development of the pupil materials in the teachers' aid book.

The real advantages of the German catechism are in another direction, however. They are in the use of an elevated children's language for children, and also in the "shape" of the Christian message. It sounds very much like the Message Christ came to bring, for which all Hebrew teaching had prepared His hearers. It is not the uncolored phrasing of the theological lecture hall (where colorful speech is treasonous). It bears something of that stamp of the Hebrew Scriptures in which (as Bede Griffiths writes) "the reality behind nature and behind the conflicts of human life (were) encountered at a level of significance beyond anything that I had known before. These encounters were an experience . . . not of the mind alone but of the mind and will, the imagination and the senses. . . . This power (which directs and controls life) revealed itself not merely as the Beauty which underlies nature . . . not merely as the Truth which philosophy discerns . . . but as a moral power, a power of Good, which made inexorable demands on men and could only be conceived as a living person."

The Bible makes such demands in God's name. Jesus Christ was interested in doing nothing else. Yet a German catechist, Joseph Linden, S.J., could once write, "The contents of the catechism must be dry and not very agreeable to children. Brevity imposes this." The German bishops here sustain a quite different view.

"RELENTLESS SELF-JUDGMENT"

The World of Ibsen

STEPHEN WHICHER

WE NOTICE first the landscapes. A tremendous range of mountains looms through the rain behind the home of the Alvings in *Ghosts*. In the last scene the sun touches a far-off peak as the curtain drops. The mountains tower so close over Brand's home—which the sun reaches only three weeks in the year—that avalanches will pass harmlessly *over* the house. Waterfalls are everywhere; throughout *Rosmersholm* we hear the rush of the stream that has taken Beata and will take Rosmer and Rebecca. In the other direction a narrow, bottomless fjord winds out of sight to the distant ocean.

That life can be hard in this vertical world goes without saying. Even the towns offer little relief, absorbed as they are in local affairs, small-minded places where neither idealism nor joy in life can find air to breathe. Yet Ibsen's plays do not weigh down the spectator in the manner, for instance, of Strindberg's *Dance of Death*. The closed world of dark fjords and heavy middle-class interiors that repels Ibsen's casual readers opens, on greater acquaintance, into deeper and deeper vistas in every direction, upward, outward, and downward. If the grand landscape crushes in, it also draws out, and always does both with maximum force.

Outward there is first the sea, "the terrible that attracts and repels," as Ellida Wangel defines it in *The Lady From the Sea*. For her its lure is embodied in the Stranger from the North. Rebecca West in *Rosmersholm* also comes (by sea) from the extreme North, where the pagan Viking spirit of old Norway made its last stand. The North enters other plays like a wind from the sea.

Beyond the sea lies the great world, where Ibsen himself found emancipation. There is America, for example, not always regarded by Ibsen with a kindly eye—it was here Peer Gynt made his fortune, trafficking in slaves and idols. But Lona Hessel blows into *Pillars of the Community* like a breath from the prairies to "let in some fresh air" on Bernick's living lie, and Dina Dorf escapes to a new freedom in the New World. Or we have an equally mythical Paris in *Ghosts*: "Over there the mere fact of being alive is considered a matter for exultant happiness." Peer answered for a part of his author when Wari asked him, "Will you travel far?" "To the sea." "So far?" "And farther still."

Yet here, remembering that Peer nearly annihilated himself by going "round about," we meet the counterforce. Though Ibsen chose exile on grounds of the highest principle, it is striking how few of his characters follow his example. With the steadfastness of Hawthorne's Hester Prynne, they face their lot where fate has cast it. Exile was a necessity for Ibsen, but he paid a heavy price for it. "Up here, by the fjords, is my native land. But—but—but! Where am I to find my homeland?"

Mr. Whicher, a member of the faculty of Swarthmore College, recently returned to the U.S. after a year of teaching in Europe.

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NOTHING is more unlike the Ibsen of the plays than the frock-coated, be-lilaced caricature of respectability which glares from his statues and pictures. His violently conflicting emotions would have torn him apart if he had not been able to discharge them into his plays. A fierce revolt and protest lies at their heart, a savage demand for freedom at all costs—matched by an iron conscience that told him all revolt must be paid for. The closing-in, opening-out character of Ibsen's landscapes mirrors his inner country.

His world opens not only outward but downward and upward. Downward lie the mines, where the ore sings to the hammerblows of the miner who will leave light and life behind to seek it out. Downward, too, are the depths of the sea where the maimed and broken can lie hidden in the weeds and everything that gnaws and rankles can find peace. But the heights drew Ibsen most. They seemed to impose a stern Either/Or which his Scandinavian soul could not resist: either love or greatness; either joy or one's calling; either humanity or freedom. His will to freedom is expressed in the early poem, "On the Vidde," in which a young lover, hunting on the upland moors, learns from a stranger "with eyes like glacial pools" to look down on the burning of his mother's house and the wedding of his bride to another man with detachment, as spectacles. Having "grieved my heart free," he is fitted for life on the heights.

Now am I steelset; I follow the call
That bids me roam the heights!
I have lived out my lowland life;
Here, up on the *vidde,* are freedom and God—
The rest grope down below.

The same ambiguous call to the heights is the subject of *Brand,* Ibsen's challenge to his nation. To Brand the spirit of trimming and compromise is the deadly enemy; his motto is, Nothing—or All. He sets out single-handed to make his little flock of poor fishermen into supermen. One can understand the appeal of the Brand image to Ibsen, since in such a priest-hero he could imagine a union of the freedom he craved and the responsibility he could not surrender. Already in *Brand,* however, he showed his extraordinary power to stand aside and judge his own characters. Sacrifice is a loadstone-rock to Brand: his motto seems to mean, not *Win* all or nothing, but *Give* all or nothing. He is a fanatic of the Will; with tears and suffering, for he is not unfeeling, he denies his mother the last rites of the church and drives his son, his wife, and finally himself to a fruitless death. In the end he realizes that his heroic God has lacked *caritas.*

THE SAME violent rebellion at man's damnable littleness lies at the heart of Ibsen's first "modern" plays: *Pillars of the Community, A Doll's House, Ghosts,* and *An Enemy of the People.* All are blows against the petty forces in society that hinder man from obeying the motto taught in *Peer Gynt*: Be Thyself. Nora's challenge to society, for instance, is still Brand's, transferred from a Herculean figure to the least likely of persons, as if to stress its necessity to all men. When she ceases to be her husband's doll and sets out to be herself, she also must sacrifice children, reputation, all she has of value. She must give all or nothing. So Fru Alving, "Nora twenty years older," does not dare to give all—and her reward is nothing. Dr. Stockmann's great discovery is the same; "The strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone."

This genial nihilist, with his "All who live by lies ought to be exterminated," well illustrates the berserk, go-for-broke quality of Ibsen's challenge in these plays. His rebels do not announce a program; they do not even seriously pose questions; they simply explode. That explosions are destructive Ibsen knew as well as we do. Already the question is gathering under the surface: What gain can justify this havoc?

With *The Wild Duck* the undertone becomes the theme. The counter-image to Brand, the man of will, namely Peer, the dreamer and "dikter," comes to the fore again, this time not so indulgently treated. The idealist, too, is now clearly destructive, however well-meaning. Urge the dreamer to act, the play suggests, and the result is disaster. The last word is the doctor's: "Life would be all right if we could only get rid of these damned fools who keep dunning poor people like us with their 'claim of the ideal.'"

THE SAME pessimistic skepticism controls the next three plays, varied as they are. *The Lady From the Sea,* the most "positive" and the slightest of the three, reads like a companion piece to *A Doll's House.* Wisely released by her husband, Ellida sees the folly of a desperate plunge like Nora's into the unknown, and freely chooses home and responsibility. In *Rosmersholm* the ruthless woman of action Fru Alving wished to be is broken by the ghost of the past as much as is the innocent idealist and dreamer; the dead wife claims them both. The divine discontent of Brand and the young Peer dwindles in *Hedda Gabler* to a sick restlessness, purely aimless and destructive. The cold dissection of the human animal in that most mirthless

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of comedies finds its spokesman in Hetman, the Brendel of the first draft of *Rosmersholm*: "The Master forgot to give us wings. Both outer and inner ones. So let us crawl on the earth as long as we can. There is nothing else to be done."

The hard detachment of *Hedda Gabler* masked Ibsen's own deep involvement. As the acid of skepticism ate inward, past the "Christian" condemnation of Brand and the general verdict on mankind of these later plays, it revealed the true pattern etched on the plate: Ibsen's personal guilt. He had charity for Peer, none for himself. He held Doomsday over himself in the four introspective plays of his old age, beginning with *The Master Builder*. What had the great work amounted to, each play asks over again, to which he had sacrificed so much? "Nothing, nothing! The whole is nothing." And the price! Happiness, love, life itself, and not his only but that of others as well.

Solness feels the thought of what he has done to those who loved him as "a great raw place here on my breast" that will never heal. The lure of the heights, as Allmers discovered, is the lure of death; and Borkman and Rubek finally discover that they *are* dead, self-slain.

THE LAST plays have been called dramas of redemption, but surely no bubble of hope was ever more fragile than the castles in the air that the heroes of these plays dream of. The dominant image in them, one might well say in all Ibsen's drama, is the wide eyes of the dead children—all the sacrified lives, including his own. "It is not true," Rita tells Allmers after the drowning of little Eyolf, "that he was swept away at once. They say they saw him lying on the bottom. Deep down in the clear water. They say he lay on his back. Quite still. With great open eyes. . . ." "And now we shall never, never see him again." "Day and night I shall see him before me as he lay there. With great open eyes."

To an American, Ibsen's terrible sense of responsibility is a tonic and a shock, since our literature, by and large, is a plea of Not Guilty. We are repelled, and rightly, as he was in the end, by the monstrous gigantism of Brand, the cult of Will that was Ibsen's demon. By contrast, the writers of our heroic age in literature, men like Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman, show a flexible receptivity, a reliance on sources of power larger than themselves, which is much richer and more human. But the relentless self-judgment with which Ibsen faced the upshot of his life and concluded, "I have what I have deserved," is something which, in the twilight of our Age of Innocence, we are not accustomed to find in our authors. It may be that as time goes on the great Norwegian dramatist will have more to say to us.

THE SCREEN

MR. ROBERTS RIDES AGAIN

DURING World War II our screens had an abundance of films about ships and their courageous personnel; some of these movies were quite good, and varied in techniques from Noel Coward's cross-section of men-at-sea in "In Which We Serve" to the fine American documentary "The Fighting Lady." In the decade since the war, there have been many more films showing Navy men in action on their ships and off, but lately these movies have concentrated on the men's reactions to their officers, from the much-despised Captain Queeg to the much-loved Mr. Roberts. Now comes a new film, "Away All Boats," elaborately produced in Hollywood with the cooperation of the Navy. Unfortunately, it tries to duplicate all previous movies about gallant ships and their gallant crews.

Not having read Kenneth Dodson's best-seller on which Ted Sherdeman based his script, I can not say how accurately the film follows the novel; but as a movie, "Away All Boats," though very well made, tries too hard to include too much. In its documentary aspects "Away All Boats" succeeds admirably, making clear how an attack transport like the U.S.S. *Belinda* operates, what it does during a shakedown cruise and the part it plays on combat duty in a landing action. But when the film gets around to acquainting us with the personnel, it becomes episodic and wanders far and wide, using cliches to hurry up the process. There's the captain (Jeff Chandler) alternating toughness and charm; he works the men to death during the training program to make the *Belinda* the top APA in the fleet; deep down he's on the side of the men who resent him.

He remains lonely and detached right up to his death, when someone says: "All of us are better because of what he gave." The character next in importance is the lieutenant (George Nader) who's had years of experience as a Merchant Marine captain and who hopes to command a ship before this second World War is over; but he's definitely kept in his place by the captain who finds him too valuable to release. And there are the executive officer (Lex Barker), unpopular because of his socialite background and seeming lack of cooperation until he proves a hero; the young ship's surgeon (Keith Andes), the wise-cracking beachmaster (Charles McGraw), and the hardened first lieutenent (Richard Boone), the hysterical ensign (Don Keefer) who causes a friendly plane to be shot down, and the inexperienced young lieutenant (William Reynolds) who becomes a hero on a rescue mission; and on and on right down the line to the unsanitary boy from Tennessee who's charmingly naive and an expert at grinding garbage.

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Director Joseph Pevney interrupts the action with a flashback to Naber and his wife (Julie Adams); while this single flashback introduces a homey aspect to the proceedings, it is somewhat forced and extraneous to this story of fighting men. Director Pevney has handled well the individual episodes of "Away All Boats," but, ultimately, the film lacks unity. I wish along with all its exciting action and crowding of characters it had taken a little more time to develop a single theme.

IT SEEMS that as Joan Crawford goes on and on through the years improving in acting and in looks she gets fewer vehicles worthy of her talents. William Goetz's production of "Autumn Leaves" and the good cast are fine, but the story is the worst kind of soap opera. It starts interestingly enough with Joan as an attractive old maid who missed her chances at marriage because she took care of her father. When a lonely and good-looking young man (Cliff Robertson) picks her up in a restaurant, they soon become friends and they fall in love. She tells him, however, to find a girl of his own age. So far, so good. But then he comes back, persists, spends the night—and they are married in Mexico. And Joan gradually makes discoveries. She catches him in lie after lie, and then one day his ex-wife (Vera Miles) turns up. The plot goes downhill fast after that! It turns out that Cliff is psychotic—and that his former wife and his father are in cahoots. Joan tells them off in no uncertain terms, but when Cliff throws a typewriter at her, she realizes something must be done. At last something *is* done, but by this time Director Robert Aldrich has thrown in touches of every soap opera that ever appeared on radio, TV and screen, plus a few standard cliches from really good films. What's more, "Autumn Leaves" hasn't forgotten that sex can always be relied upon to spruce up even a maudlin story. If you stay to the end of this one, you'll discover that all the autumn leaves have fallen.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"THE SUPREME COURT"

Lakeville, Conn.

TO the Editors: The Sikes Bill (H.R. 11095), introduced into Congress on May 8, providing that no justice be appointed to the Supreme Court unless he has had at least five years' previous judicial service on a federal court or the highest court of a state does not seem "obviously aimed at Chief Justice Warren," as an editorial in The Commonweal put it [June 29]; such a law would have barred all of the current Justices. Justice Black's term of eighteen months as a police judge in Birmingham is, I believe, the most extensive judicial experience any of the present Justices had before going on the Supreme Bench.

In any field (education, the military, the Church), all requirements for specific appointments are likely to prevent the appointment of some exceptional men; but rules for our highest court that will probably ensure a high degree of competence *as judges* of all members, ought to overbalance the loss of some men who might achieve the greatest distinction. The common recent practice of appointing talented trial lawyers, legislators, good executives, and personal or political friends of the President's permits the Supreme Court of the United States to become a training school for judges.

In the decision of the Supreme Court (in the Steve Nelson case, April 2, 1956) that when Congress passed a law in the field of subversive activities it ended the power of a state to legislate on the same subject, the Court assumed that that was "the intent" of Congress. Twelve Senators quickly introduced a bill (under the clear authority of the Constitution, Article III, Section 2) providing "When Congress intends a Federal law to invalidate all state laws in the same field it will say so; otherwise no court is to assume such an intention." Deputy Attorney General Rogers in supporting this bill wrote: "the available direct evidence strongly indicates that Congress intended to leave state legislation unaffected." Among the items of direct evidence (according to Arthur Krock, New York *Times,* May 20) is the fact that the author of the law involved (the Smith Act) said that the legislation had no such intention, and the further essentially conclusive fact that the Smith Act is to be found "in title 18 of the Federal Code which states in its Preamble that no part of it invalidates state laws to the same purpose."

If these two bills become laws, they should do much to bring the Supreme Court back to its original function, and to prevent it from becoming an all-powerful super-legislative chamber for the United States and for each of the states.

J. M. O'NEILL.

"FRANCO, PERON AND THE CHURCH"

Lans, Tyrol, Austria

TO the Editors: Reading your editorial on "Franco, Perón and the Church" [June 1], I felt somewhat uneasy about the second part of your remarks in which you refer to social injustice and anticlericalism in Argentina and in Spain. I know nothing about Argentina, but I am a frequent visitor (and outspoken critic) of Spain, and therefore I believe that nothing in the way of criticism leveled against contemporary Spain has been more sterile and valueless than two attitudes: the

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morbid admiration of the Franco regime and the other manifestation of provincialism, its "sectarian liberal" condemnation.

As to social conditions in Spain, let us agree that, at the moment, the general economic level of the working classes, the peasantry and the rural proletariat is only slightly higher than twenty or thirty years ago. It is in absolute terms still appallingly low. It has not kept step with the general improvement in the rest of Europe. Yet (just as in Italy), the craving for a higher standard of living is much greater than any betterment, and the result—in Southern Europe—is a revolt against the whole existing order (which *partly* explains "anticlericalism").

Yet two rarely ventilated questions remain which are usually not dealt with by political observers. Number One: "Are the natural resources of Spain such that a higher 'social product' can, at all, be expected?" Number Two: "Is the Spaniard's will to work—and to work hard—such that he makes the best of his country's meager resources?" I am inclined—after prolonged studies—to answer both questions in the negative. Not *much* can be done to improve on the first problem, yet, up to a point, one can blame the present government for not having made concentrated efforts to re-educate the average Spaniard, to convince him of the necessity to compete more effectively with the "ethos of work" prevailing in Northern Europe. We *are* living in "One World"; the ditch-digger in Andalusia has to be conscious of the ditch-digger's fervor and efforts in Holstein. . . .

This is not only and purely a Spanish question; it is a Mediterranean problem. It is one of the crucial problems of the World of the "Old Church" (Catholic, Schismatic) as compared to the Protestant World. *If one part of a specific civilization lives in order to work, the other part cannot easily continue to work in order to live.* "Abyssus abyssum vocat." (And if one great power introduces compulsory military service, the rest of the world willy-nilly has to follow suit.)

There is a distinct possibility that in Spain atomic power will solve problem Number One. Number Two is another matter. Spaniards frankly loathe work. So do I. Even without reading the Bible I know that work is a curse. Unfortunately, too many Spaniards want to eat their cake and have it. Tourism, more than anything else, tells them about foreign living standards. They want to have these living standards without changing the Spanish way of life. They want to be a nation of prosperous people without the subtle slavery of modern man. It can't be done. They'll have to give up a substantial part of their freedom as I have done myself.

In all these respects the Italian (and even the French) situation is not radically different. Only Italian living standards have risen colossally the last fifty years. All of which disposes of neither Italian Communism nor anticlericalism. The tourists come and go. The "rich" stay. So the cry goes up to rob the wealthy ones, the ambitious ones, and ambition with us is considered a vice.

I am thoroughly convinced that a total spoliation of the *beati possidentes* in Spain would not solve any *social* problem. The pyramid of wealth is so steep that the thin top divided among the masses would provide the average Spaniard only with a few pesetas. And while it is extremely difficult to tax the wealthy Spaniards, one could not (directly) tax the poor. This would be the end of every and any government in Spain.

A total spoliation would only end the problem of envy. And the rich Mediterranean loves to display his wealth. He should go in sackcloth and ashes. Here really *is* an acute psychological problem.

As to the free press (a principle I am savagely defending), I know that it would be terribly abused by demagoguery. All clever enemies of the present censorship (which is often stupid and petty) merely want it replaced by a generous, enlightened and intelligent censorship. The consensus that a truly free press will immediately be perverted by the wildest demagoguery is too general to be discounted.

The mere fact that Dr. Pedro Lain Entralgo, the *Rector Magnificus* of Madrid's university, cited and praised by Professor McMahon in his article, "Franco and Peron" [June 1], is a Falangist, shows the difficulty in appraising Spain. Many of its evils have to be laid at the door of its government. Yet we never ought to forget that a nation's shortcomings are also due to its own failings. There is a current fashion, especially in America, to treat nations only in terms of their government. By no means do I want to repeat the silly phrase that every nation has the government it deserves, but nations consist of human beings, and since the Fall man has ceased to be perfect. Our imperfections are part and parcel of our personalities. The belief that man is naturally good and that only society or the state corrupts him is sheer Rousseauism . . . a pitfall the Christian must be strongly aware of.

Thus without our local prejudices and instead of taking our virtues and ingrained notions as a measuring rod, we ought to look at Spain with a truly sovereign mind. Not that all Spaniards know best what is good for them—no nation does—but Spanish affairs, like those of all other countries, have to be studied and understood not only in the cold light of reason and of Christian doctrine, but also with the knowledge of the hard facts concerning the natural resources and the character of this remarkable nation which, in spite of its glaring defects, cannot but elicit the admiration of all those who know it well.

ERIK VON KUEHNELT-LEDDIHN.

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Beleagured Reputation of a Great Iconoclast

H. L. MENCKEN, A PORTRAIT FROM MEMORY. By Charles Angoff. Thomas Yoseloff, Inc. $3.95.

MINORITY REPORT: H. L. MENCKEN'S NOTEBOOKS. Alfred A. Knopf. $3.95.

By R. T. HORCHLER

JAMES Branch Cabell once referred to H. L. Mencken as a phenomenon "somewhere between electricity and influenza." But Mencken is dead, and the Battle of the Books of the twenties and thirties seems far behind us. Looking back, we may disparage its alarums and excursions as trivial and foolish, but we must resist the temptation to do so. Nothing dates so quickly and disastrously as polemic, and yet little is more important in its time. And if the polemicist of the past is only an unpleasant bore to the present, we must grant him nonetheless his role and his stature in history.

These reflections are provoked by a pair of books which suggest that H. L. Mencken was no more than a successful literary opportunist and the cult of Menckenism no more than a literary fluke. One of these defamatory books is by Charles Angoff, Mencken's long-time friend and co-worker on the *Mercury,* and the other is a posthumous work by Mencken himself. Mr. Angoff's study, *H. L. Mencken, A Portrait from Memory,* is an exposé. It is detailed, vivid and unquestionably truthful as far as it goes, but is so unbalanced, simply by omission, that it conveys at best a half-truth. That Mencken was prejudiced, violent and unreasonable in argument is not a revelation. That his motives were questionable, his judgments sometimes cynically insincere, even that his scholarship is suspect, we may—for the sake of discussion—accept as at least possible. And we may admit—despite its final irrelevance—the unattractiveness of his disposition and personal habits. But to say only this of Mencken is misleading and unfair.

To give Mr. Angoff his due, his book accomplishes precisely what he wished it to. He explains in a preface that his purpose was not biography, but an "impressionistic" recreation of "the man in all his aspects." And he succeeds very well in this purpose. He makes the Great Iconoclast live again in the narratives of Mencken in action, in the *Mercury* offices, at home, in restaurants and at parties, and in reams of Mencken conversation, codified according to topic, and laced with Mencken wit, malice and obscenity. This is the undeniable value of the book.

And still one must protest. Mr. Angoff remarks of Mencken that "whatever réclame he enjoyed was due largely to the temper of his time." This is quite true, although Mencken's works and their effect upon that temper need also to be mentioned, and its corollary is that a study of Mencken which ignores the temper of his time, and his works, is therefore of doubtful validity. Yet Mr. Angoff only says, "I make no formal attempt to evaluate Mencken's individual books, and I do little to place him in the context of his time."

Let us have the truth about Mencken, or any literary idol, but let it be the whole truth. What Mr. Angoff reveals about Mencken has clear interest and value, but surely the most important thing about a writer is what he writes. It was Mencken's work which made him a prophet, a leader and a symbol; it was his work which made it worthwhile for Mr. Angoff to record his conversations, to recall his foibles and eccentricities. Mr. Angoff makes few references to Mencken's major writings, and when he does mention them, in passing, he is always subtly, or not so subtly, deprecating.

Unfortunately for Mencken's reputation, his *Notebooks* contain nothing to contradict Mr. Angoff's belittlements. Mencken's own preface indicates that he intended to make a book out of these miscellaneous jottings, but the extent of the editing (by Mencken or anyone else) is not made clear. At any rate whatever editing was done was not enough. The notes are undated (although most of them appear to have been written late in Mencken's life), they are presented with no system, and their effect is diluted by much overlapping and repetition.

Most of the entries are quite short, ranging from a sentence to no more than a couple of pages. They are, according to their author, "scrawls" which he never got around to "working up." Nevertheless, they are recognizable as genuine albeit inferior Menckeniana, iconoclastic hand grenades tossed at the same old targets—politicians, pedagogues, clergymen and the booboisie. Some few of the notes are *pensées* which are offered seriously and which demand serious consideration, but too many are merely cheap and clever journalistic gibes.

It is regrettable that Mencken's political and economic views, always crack-pot and naive, should dominate this volume. The heterodoxy which was smart thirty years ago is stale and dreary today, and fascist professions and know-nothingism seem not so amusing in 1956. There are, of course, flashes of wit and wisdom in the attacks on democracy and the welfare state and American manners and morals generally, but they are lost in a flood of ignorance and invective.

Both the *Notebooks* and Mr. Angoff's memoir deserve to be read, for a fuller knowledge of Mencken—or rather, of all that was deplorable in his cast of mind and unlovely in his personality. He was insensitive, intellectually narrow, and too easily content with superficialities; he was personally vain, dogmatic and cruel. But having read the *Notebooks* and Mr. Angoff's "intimate portrait," and having made these harsh pronouncements, one should turn back to *A Book of Prefaces,* the *Prejudices, The American Language* and the *Supplements.* One should turn back as well to the writings of those he engaged in battle—both the giants and the

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pygmies. And only then should judgment be passed.

With all his limitations, his buffoonery and irresponsibility, Mencken was a major figure in his time. He epitomized and led a great cultural revolution. He was a gifted writer, a courageous, brilliant controversialist, a shaper of the American culture. Whatever else he may have been, he was these things too.

Forms of Betrayal

THE TORTURED EARTH. By Gert Legid. Translated by Mervyn Savill. Henry Regnery Company. $3.75.

By WILLIAM JAMES SMITH

UPON ITS publication in Germany in 1955 *The Tortured Earth* was hailed by German critics as the finest novel to come out of the last war. Its success in Germany was, no doubt, in part due to the author's careful avoidance of any political imputations. The German people may very possibly feel a profound sense of guilt as the catalyst of man's most recent attempt at self-annihilation, but the German novel reader can hardly be expected to revel in its explication. This is not to say, of course, that *The Tortured Earth* is a complacent book—it is agonizingly honest in its way, within the realm of personal experience. Nor is there any trace of pettiness or vindictiveness in it.

The action of the book takes place at the siege of Leningrad and shifts from the German to the Russian troops with perfect "objectivity," in the sense that both sides are viewed with a deeply sympathetic concern for the individual trapped in the monstrous machine of war. Indeed the Russian Captain Sostschenko most nearly qualifies as a conventional hero. He is more individually realized than many of the German characters, who tend to be referred to almost impersonally as "the runner," "the sergeant-major," "the M.P." for all that they do have names.

It is an interesting commentary on the apolitical tone of the novel that none of the characters, German or Russian, reflects upon the righteousness of the bloody task in which he is engaged. Emotional involvement is largely in terms of personal bravery or cowardice. Death, madness, and despair are the only rewards of either, unless it be a sort of stoic hardness that substitutes for conviction.

The incidents of the book revolve loosely around the forms of betrayal, military and personal, into which the various members of a German front-line company are driven when they come under attack. There is the captain who is taken and innocently betrays his men to the Russian lieutenant who understands that the Germans "do not eat any more sauerkraut than we do." There is the sergeant-major who runs away and is shot "as an example." There is the captain who shoots him and stumbles off, insane, shouting "I must have a bath!" There is the major whose wife and child have just been killed and who commands only from despair. It is the major who sums up the tone of the book. At the burial service which concludes the novel he turns away indifferently from the priest's "unctuous" words, commenting, "Yes, it would be unthinkable if that were a lie too."

This "religious" note which runs through the book, however, rings somewhat spuriously even in its cynicism. Sostschenko dreaming deliriously of his broken icon and the major's plaintive hopes are more like a novelistic condescension than the expression of any real religious concern. The author obviously and genuinely pities his characters, but he is equally skeptical that they will receive pity from any higher source. Rather, he pities them all the more for their hopes. The effect is deeply moving but scarcely religious.

The Tortured Earth is a short novel and partly for that reason it is technically unsatisfying. The range of personality and incident it attempts to cover is considerable, but the action is so confused, the pace so frantic, and the style so elliptical that it is impossible to move along with it smoothly. The effect is that of a kaleidoscope of blood and mud and bursting flares, stunning and impressive in its way without being personally involving. The novel confirms the critical commonplace: you do not convey the effect of boredom by being boring. Neither does Mr. Legid's breakneck rush convey the confusion and complexity of the situation itself. The confusion is on the page. None of the difficulty, incidentally, lies in the translation, which reads smoothly and colloquially and copes handsomely with the technical difficulties of military nomenclature.

Manners, Values, and Literature

IN SEARCH OF HERESY: American Literature in an Age of Conformity. By John W. Aldridge. McGraw Hill. $4.

By THOMAS F. CURLEY

"OUR QUESTION, then, will not be the quality of the mind behind the work, but the quality of the world before the mind, and the uses which the mind seems able to make of that world." This sentence, taken from the fifth essay of *In Search of Heresy,* relates the present work to the author's earlier book, *After the Lost Generation;* it also helps to correct a mistake.

In the first work, where he proved himself an alert and serious critic of the contemporary novel, Mr. Aldridge was primarily concerned with the quality of mind behind the work and with the work itself. The first five essays of *In Search of Heresy,* about three-fourths of the book, are devoted to the complementary study of the world before the mind. The mistake to be corrected is the widespread notion that Mr. Aldridge's principal purpose was to lambaste the universities that, with their writers' kennels, manufacture a literature that has no relation to everyday experience. That is part of his purpose but by no means all of it. Writers have retreated to the campuses because there is nowhere else for them to

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go. They wanted heresy but they could not find it so they took what they could get—orthodoxy, or conformity.

The assumption Mr. Aldridge makes is that the possibility of choice in the American culture has receded. I take the assumption to be indisputable. It is his delineation of the world that makes conformism inevitable that seems to me inadequate. What does he say?

From the start, Mr. Aldridge has been concerned with values. He made this clear and explicit in his Preface to *After the Lost Generation* and later, in the *Partisan Review,* he explained that, as novelists and critics ". . . we are aware of value only to the extent that we are able to discover it in the form it most characteristically takes in society; and that is in the form of social manners." Manners, however, are dependent upon social classes and there are, therefore, no manners in America except in the ". . . Deep South and that area of northeastern United States whose moral capital is Boston, Massachusetts." No manners, no values; no values, no possibility of heresy and, therefore, no human personalities. The climate of controversy and Mr. Aldridge's serious commitment to literature explain his hyperbola.

What are manners? Lionel Trilling, whose influence Mr. Aldridge acknowledges and whom he quotes at length, wrote: "What I understand by manners, then, is a culture's hum and buzz of implication. I mean the whole evanescent context in which its explicit statements are made. It is that part of a culture which is made up of half-uttered or unutterable expressions of value." And in the essay "Art and Fortune" he went on ". . . one of the things which makes for substantiality of character in the novel is precisely the notation of manners, that is to say, of class traits modified by personality." Aldridge comments: "or, he might have said, personality modified by class traits." He does not explain this reversal of Trilling's emphasis but in his essay on David Riesman's "gray new world" he gives us a clue. Here are two of Mr. Aldridge's statements that occur about a page apart: (1) "The 'investigation of illusion and reality,' which Lionel Trilling considers to be the proper business of the novel, quite literally depends upon the existence of some 'inner-directed' ideal or dream. . ."; (2) "This change which, if Riesman is correct, has resulted in the rise of a new 'other-directed' personality type, must cause us drastically to revise our conception of drama, just as it must drive the novel either to extinction or to the discovery of new dramatic effects." Now Mr. Trilling has said that the great work of our time is the restoration and the reconstruction of the will, and Mr. Aldridge, in his quest for heresy, is at one with him. But a man with a will of his own is an "inner-directed" man, and if David Riesman is right that tribe is diminishing. Can the labors of twenty geniuses with the critics behind them rehabilitate him and render him fertile? Not if Riesman is right. I don't want to insist on the paradox. Both Mr. Trilling and Mr. Aldridge are capable of functioning while holding opposed ideas. To reverse an emphasis, their passion is their doubt and their doubt is their task.

But we can ask if they are not, however, revealing what Mr. Aldridge, in criticism of Malcolm Cowley, calls ". . . a certain queasiness before the moral combat of cognition"? I think they are; and I think Mr. Trilling, with gracious candor, admits as much in the fourth section of "Art and Fortune." Unless you close your eyes, to see or not to see is not a matter of choice, and if the "desperate perceptions of our life" lead us farther and farther into the darkness until the hope of "reconstituting the great former will of humanism" is lost forever, then it must be done. Mr. Aldridge is right: the will is paralyzed and the sense of the future is deranged. No amount of choice-making situations will take the place of that power which is the substance of hope and the reason for choice—faith. But faith is impossible in an absurd world and the most vigorous thought of our time declares that man and the world exist in absurdity.

Absurdity. In the last quarter of *In Search of Heresy,* Mr. Aldridge shifts back to a consideration of the quality of the mind behind the work. His first, and most pertinent, subject is Ernest Hemingway. Who among American writers has engaged absurdity with the fidelity of Hemingway? He is an ascetic of the absurd and I find it curious that Mr. Aldridge did not relate this quality of Hemingway's to his own preceding chapters. Instead he adopts for his own use a psychoanalytical interpretation — that of Philip Young—according to which Hemingway's obsessive preoccupation with death is traced to a trauma he suffered in 1918. Mr. Aldridge emphasizes the parallels between Hemingway's creative processes and those of primitive man, but he treats Hemingway's obsession and its concomitant intuition as peculiar.

He traces the degradation of Hemingway's successive heroes. They became more and more ridiculous; physical death and psychic death become one and the same thing. It is as if he were saying, this is the way it is, and we were answering, no, no, but even if it is, it makes for bad art, that primitivism is permissible so long as youth gives it vitality, but that an aging savage is ugly. Young Socrates' disgust for ideas of filth and rubbish made old Parmenides smile. Hemingway may be exhausted but I think he may manage a smile when he hears from the States of his "familiar primitivism." Aldridge does not see that the decline of manners, which he has lamented, may provoke an artist like Hemingway to strip his works to the bone in order to discover what, if anything, is still valid in our society.

Drab and Golden

ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY. By C. S. Lewis, Oxford University Press. $7.

By ANNE FREMANTLE

NO CENTURY in English experience was more traumatic than the sixteenth; here Renaissance and Reformation (whatever they

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were) met head-on with a vernacular that had been slow centuries a-growing, and a Latin that had been, depending on one's viewpoint, ripening or rotting for more than a milennium and a half.

Mr. Lewis' sixty-five page introduction, on the new learning and the new ignorance, is a superbly comprehensive account of what was lost, and what gained, by English literature in that disturbed and troubled time, which in one century carried England from medieval to modern, from Catholic to Protestant, from a small feudal power half ruined by the civil Wars of the Roses, to the zenith of the golden Elizabethan age, when the Armada lay drowned, France was perforce friendly and Pope and Emperor had been successfully defied.

Mr. Lewis divides the century he studies. The beginning was still medieval in form and spirit; an earnest, heavy-handed, commonplace mid-century, "a drab age. Then, in the last quarter . . . the unpredictable happened. With startling suddenness we ascend. Fantasy, conceit, paradox, color, incantation return. Youth returns. Sidney, Spenser, Shakespeare, Hooker . . . display what is almost a new culture: that culture which was to last through most of the seventeenth century and to enrich the very meanings of the words *England* and *Aristocracy*."

Whence this rejuvenation, this miracle? Some have thought it was caused by the Renaissance, but Mr. Lewis will have none of this. The more we look, he tells us, the harder we shall find it to believe that humanism had either the wish or the power to encourage "the literature which actually arose." Nor was it the new look in science which effected the miracle, for in literature the Copernican theory is rarely mentioned, and certainly had no such effect as Darwin had upon Victorian, or Freud upon our own, imaginations. For medieval man had not been puffed up by being the cosmic center. Locally central, the earth was "dynamically marginal: the rim of being, farthest from the hub." The new combination of science and Protestantism chilled the earth and drove from it 'rewards and fairies' as Bishop Brent's lovely lament points out. And, moreover, with the new knowledge man, disoriented, lost his place in the hierarchy of being. Medieval man was truly composite, a "rational animal capable of laughter" who, though he could become a saint, could not become an angel; he could "become a swinish man but not a pig." Now man could become anything, or nothing. Pico della Mirandola, for example, for all his breathtaking cry "how beauteous mankind is" anticipates, Mr. Lewis suggests, Sartre, in that he suggests that man "has no specific nature at all, but creates his own nature by his acts." This leads man both to astrology and to magic, opposite as they are. The magician seeks power for its own sake, since now man can be raised "to the performance of all things possible"; whereas astrology affirms that the "little creatures who dreamed of controlling the winds and raising the dead, were in reality only the stars' tennis balls."

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Mr. Lewis destroys, neatly and completely, the idea that the humanists, "in putting back the great clock of linguistic change" to the age of Cicero, could ever have restored some artificially golden classical language, ripe from Terence to Virgil, rude before and decadent or senile after. Language cannot be separated from people speaking; the humanists tried, and their stilted exercises are not even come down to us as the bouquet of old brandy. They destroyed the "growing, sensitive, supple language of Bede, Aquinas, the great hymns or the Carmina Burana," but today medieval philosophy is "still read as philosophy, the history as history, the songs as songs, the hymns are still in use." Of the humanists' stiff and musty texts only one has survived on its own merits —perhaps because the author was both saint and martyr—St. Thomas More's *Utopia.* The humanists are read when they are reached in history or in literature, as examples of themselves, but we read the "barbarous" authors in order to be "instructed or delighted about any theme they choose to handle." Finally, with a splendid phrase, Mr. Lewis happily dismisses the humanists: "Before they had ceased talking of a rebirth it became evident that they had really built a tomb," for to imitate the ancients directly is to "manufacture a symptom."

Humanism, Mr. Lewis concludes, in the field of ideas was obscurantist; in the field of language, not less so. "Until the fog of classicism has lifted, the greater classics are invisible." In religion, it was generally Protestant, for "the eagerness to smell out and condemn vestiges of popery in the Church, and the eagerness to smell out and condemn vestiges of 'barbarism' in one's neighbor's Latin had, psychologically, much in common." Yet he is careful to warn us not to generalize: the historian of genius can rewrite history—no more perfect examples of George Orwell's *unspeak* exist than some of the writings of Froude, J. R. Green, or Thomas Carlyle; but he cannot tell similar lies about literature, for the writings remain: More's *Utopia* proves, among other things, that a Catholic could be a

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humanist, a saint off-color in his jokes, a bourgeois more heroic in his calm courage than a late-Roman nobleman. We must continually be on our guard against schematizing, must remind ourselves that "a Protestant may be Thomistic, a humanist may be a Papist, a scientist may be a magician, a skeptic may be an astrologer" in the sixteenth century as surely as today.

How much we have to thank Mr. Lewis for in his picturing of the great controversialists! What concerns literary historians, he notes, is to "taste tempers rather than to judge doctrines," and no one has shown more perfectly the "elbow-room of More's mind," nor how he "sows from the sack not from the hand." Nor could anyone be funnier than Mr. Lewis is in describing the "windy diet" of Spenser's Guyon feeding daily on meditations upon his own virtues; or Harrison urging the spoilation of the colleges after that of the monasteries, since "experience beats in vain upon a congenital progressive"; or Calvin, in academic jargon, lowering the honors standard and abolishing the pass degree, raising all the dark questions and giving without flinching all the dark answers. With few of Mr. Lewis' conclusions about the sixteenth century can any one reading this superb volume seriously cavil, least of all with this one: "It was an age very like our own. Behind every system of sixteenth-century thought, however learnedly it is argued, lurks cruelty and Ogpu." Let us pray that four hundred years hence our Malraux and Camus, our Manns and Faulkners, our Koestlers and Huxleys, will have as gifted, sensitive and superb an historian.

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